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Substantive questions

Evaluation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/138 B of 13 December 1996, requested the Secretary-General to conduct an evaluation, within existing resources and without detriment to mandated programmes and activities, through the services of an independent consultant selected after an open and transparent selection process, of the functioning of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, covering, *inter alia*, the infrastructure, operations, staffing and budgetary situation, with a view to improving all its services and taking advantage of new, cost-effective automated and electronic library information and communication technologies and services and taking into account previous studies on the subject, and to submit a report to the Committee on Information at its nineteenth session. Ms. Stephney Ferguson, Head of the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, and Mr. Peter I. Hajnal, International Organizations and Government Information Specialist at the University of Toronto Library, Toronto, Canada, were selected as consultants. The study was conducted from 13 to 24 January 1997. The comments by the Secretary-General are contained in addendum 1 to the present document.

II. Evaluation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library

A. Conduct of the evaluation

2. The records indicate that this is the eighth in a series of studies or evaluations of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library since 1992. Comprehensive background information was supplied to facilitate the study. This included basic facts on the Library, copies of previous evaluations and reports with staff responses, as well as samples of the Library's publications. The consultants spent a considerable amount of time perusing the background information after which 32 persons were interviewed, including the Head Librarian and senior, middle-level and other staff, in both the Professional and General Service categories. The consultants also interviewed the Director of the Library and Publications Division, Department of Public Information, and paid a courtesy call to the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information. In addition, they observed current work procedures and participated in training sessions offered by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The consultants also met the following members of the Committee on Information: Mr. Walter T. Douglas (United States of America), Mr. Pierre Henri Guignard (France), Ms. Jessica Lang-Schachtel (Costa Rica), Ms. Radhia Naima Muya (United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Nacerdine Sai (Algeria).

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3. The consultants noted a complicating factor in the conduct of the evaluation: the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 had already been prepared and submitted. In connection with that budget, a new structure for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library had been proposed. The consultants therefore had to keep in mind the proposed reorganization while evaluating the current structure.

4. Throughout the study, the consultants kept in mind the mandate of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library established by the General Assembly in 1949. Its key policy components are as follows:

(a) The Library is responsible for all library services at Headquarters and for the acquisition of all library materials;

(b) The Library's primary function is to enable the delegations, Secretariat and other official groups of the Organization to obtain, with the greatest possible speed, convenience and economy, the library materials and information needed in the execution of their duties. The materials to be assembled and the services to be maintained are determined by the needs of those groups;

(c) The services of the Library are also to be made available, as far as feasible, to the specialized agencies, accredited representatives of mass media of information, intergovernmental organizations, affiliated non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, scholars and writers. No one needing to use full sets of the documents and publications of the League of Nations, the United Nations or the specialized agencies is denied access to the Library. Service to the public, however, must necessarily be subordinate to the service needed by the United Nations.[1]

5. The consultants also noted the significant fact that the need for a United Nations library had already been recognized in the process leading to the establishment of the United Nations itself. The *Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations* recommended "a library with research and reference facilities".[2] The United Nations Headquarters Library was opened in 1946 and was dedicated on 16 November 1961 in honour of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

6. The original mandate of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has often been referred to and elaborated on in various United Nations documents, studies and elsewhere for practical working purposes in the light of new circumstances, including the implications of new information technology. It was paraphrased in a chart, prepared by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and dated 22 March 1996, as follows:

(a) Acquire and maintain a complete collection of United Nations documents and publications issued in any language anywhere in the world;

(b) Provide complete bibliographic access to all United Nations documents and publications;

(c) Keep a collection of publications about the United Nations and its activities in all languages;

(d) Enable the staff of permanent missions of Member States, delegates and Secretariat staff to obtain information needed in the execution of their duties;

(e) Establish and maintain a system of depository libraries through which users all over the world have access to United Nations documents and publications.

B. Organizational structure

7. As part of the Secretariat restructuring exercise in February 1993, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library was transferred, as of 1 February 1993, from the Office of Conference Services to the Department of Public Information, where it has been functioning within the Library and Publications Division, with the Head Librarian reporting to the Director of the Division.[3] Under the structure in effect at the time of the present evaluation, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library comprises the following subdivisions: the User Services Section, the Documentation Section and the Acquisition and Cataloguing Section. In addition, the Systems Development Desk reports directly to the Office of the Head Librarian.

8. A new structure for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been proposed for the biennium 1998-1999, which would result in the following sections reporting to the head Librarian: the Acquisition and Indexing Section, the User Services Section, the Electronic Resource Development Section and the Cartographic Section.

9. As it is the understanding of the consultants that the proposed new structure will begin to be implemented well before the beginning of the 1998-1999 biennium, their comments deal with the infrastructure, operations, staffing and budgetary situation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library under both the present structure and the proposed one.

C. Technical processes

10. The term "technical processes" refers to the activities associated with the acquisition and preparation for use of the materials that make up the collections of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Those activities include selecting and ordering all types of materials as well as the associated accounting procedures; checking in, managing and circulating the serials; checklisting and indexing the documents and publications of the organizations within the United Nations system; and cataloguing and classifying documents and publications from the specialized agencies and materials acquired from external sources.

11. Under the current organizational structure, those activities are carried out in two different sections, the Acquisition and Cataloguing Section and the Documentation Section, where the checklisting and indexing of United Nations documents is done. The activities associated with indexing, cataloguing and classification require a considerable amount of knowledge and experience. Currently, they require the creation of separate records, which results in some duplication of work. However, the planned introduction of the Integrated Library Management System, which is now being phased in, will substantially reduce the duplication of work and result in more efficient and cost-effective operations.

12. The available statistics indicate that a large volume of material, requiring considerable intellectual activity, is handled in the technical processing area. Statistics for calendar year 1996 are shown in table 1

13. The consultants anticipate that the logical grouping of technical processing activities will result in a more efficient deployment of staff and more efficient work flow, and they therefore endorse the merging of all the technical processing activities in the Acquisition and Indexing Section as proposed in the new organization structure, which accompanies the 1998-1999 budget.

14. The consultants have noted the fact that the indexing of United Nations documents requires a thorough knowledge of the United Nations, as well as sensitivity to the culture of the Organization. They are convinced that the accumulated experience that resides in the Documentation Section is an invaluable asset which should be retained.

Recommendation 1. The consultants strongly recommend that the indexing of United Nations documents should remain an integral part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library's activities.

Recommendation 2. Since the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) file design is in English, efforts should be made to ensure that all indexers are completely proficient in the English language.

Recommendation 3. Mechanisms for more effective quality control should be introduced at different stages of production of UNBIS.

Table 1
Acquisition and processing of Library materials, 1996

Material acquired	
United Nations materials	191 732 items
Specialized agencies materials	24 392 items
External materials	
Serials	78 033 items
Others	1 927 items
Processing of Library Materials	
Indexing of United Nations materials	
Regular indexing	30 113 items
Cataloguing of non-United Nations materials	
Specialized agencies	860 items
External materials	3 896 items
United Nations Bibliographic Information System records added (excluding Geneva records)	
United Nations (DOCFILE, ITP, ITS, RESFILE, VOTEREC)	37 680 items
Non-United Nations	4 089 items
Support files (ATHFILE, THESAURUS, AGENDA SERSYM)	11 548 items
Back-of-the-book indexing	7 items
Mini-catalogues	
Blue Books Series, Annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, United Nations system yellow pages, etc.	

Source:
"Dag Hammarskjöld Library Programme Performance Report January-December 1996", inter-office memorandum from Head Librarian to Director, Library and Publications Division, 7 January 1997.

D. User services

15. The term "user services" encompasses:

(a) Reference and other public services provided to the clientele of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in person, over the telephone, by electronic or regular mail or by any other means;

(b) Reference and related services based on United Nations and specialized agency documents, publications and electronic resources, as well as on information resources originating outside the United Nations system;

(c) Training of library clientele in the use of the Library's own printed and electronic resources, as well as in the use of a broader array of resources;

(d) Loans and other circulation activities;

(e) Assistance to depository libraries.

This list is not exhaustive but is intended to indicate the scope and range of the user service function.

1. Staffing

16. According to the current structure, the User Services Section has four desks and three branch libraries reporting to the Chief of Section: the United Nations/Specialized Agencies Collection Reference Desk, the External Collection Reference Desk, the Loan/Stacks Desk and the Depository Libraries Desk, as well as the Map Library, Legal Library and Statistical Library. Under the proposed new structure, the name of the Section would remain unchanged and would have the following units reporting to the Chief of Section:

(a) Depository Libraries (one Professional and two General Service staff);

(b) United Nations/Specialized Agencies Reference Unit (seven Professional and three General Service staff);

(c) General Reference Unit (six Professional and three General Service staff);

(d) Loan and Stacks Unit (one Professional and 10 General Service staff);

(e) Legal Library (one Professional and one General Service staff);

(f) Statistical Library (one Professional and one General Service staff).

17. The new structure would reduce the staff complement of the User Services Section from 45 to 39. In addition to continuing current functions, the new structure would facilitate the performance of additional tasks, notably in the areas of electronic information and access to resources. It seems, therefore, that the Section is poised to provide vital information services that are responsive to user needs in a more cost-effective manner than at present.

18. The proposed structure would also bring into the Dag Hammarskjöld Library the Cartographic Section (six Professional and two General Service staff), which would incorporate the Map Library. The consultants are of the view that, although it is structurally outside the proposed User Services Section, the Cartographic Section has much in common with the user services function. Its incorporation into the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has excellent potential to increase the Library's leadership role in improving the Map Library service. Having the Cartographic Section in the Library would also present interesting new opportunities related to the introduction of digital mapping and the expansion of access to cartographic information.

2. United Nations/Specialized Agencies Reference Unit

19. During 1996, the six librarians working at the United Nations/specialized agencies reference desk handled 45.837 queries, out of a total of 74,066 for the Library as a whole. The preferred medium has been the telephone (about 80 per cent of the queries); the desk has four telephone lines. The librarians deliver information that is often incorporated into reports, press releases or speeches, so the information must be not only accurate, but prompt. A frequent problem for users is identifying the document series symbol or sales number of documents or publications that contain the required information. Once they have identified the symbol, they have various ways of obtaining the item.

20. Other activities (for which one or two librarians rotate away from the desk a day at a time) include projects such as weeding the stacks, selecting materials to be acquired for the collection, preparing and conducting training programmes and demonstrations and participating in library-wide committees and working groups.

21. An important activity, necessitated by the urgency with which accurate information is often requested at the United Nations/specialized agencies desk and the lack of comprehensive tools that would readily provide that information, is the creation of basic ready reference tools (files, lists and the like) to meet recurrent queries. These consist of brief files (created in WordPerfect or MICROISIS) designed to answer quickly and accurately queries that cannot be answered by consulting formal bibliographic or indexing entries, such as symbols of resolutions calling for conferences to be convened. Some of these ready reference

files are of interest to a wider audience than the United Nations/specialized agencies desk; consequently, the staff has begun to convert and load the files onto the Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page on the Internet. A good example is UN-I-QUE (UN Info Quest), a database designed to provide quick access to document symbols/sales numbers for United Nations materials dating from 1946 onwards. Added to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page in late January 1997, it has already received favourable reviews for its usefulness. The consultants strongly endorse the creation and maintenance of such reference files whenever the need for them is identified.

Recommendation 4. Ready reference files created and maintained by the United Nations/specialized agencies desk should be added as separate files to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page, or, when warranted, converted to complete bibliographic records in the UNBIS/Integrated Library Management System.

3. General Reference Unit

22. The main activities of the General Reference Unit (formerly the External Collection Unit) are answering the reference queries using print, electronic and other media; training staff of the permanent missions and the Secretariat in the use of the Internet, CD-ROMs and other information resources; selection of journal articles for inclusion in UNBIS; selection of material for ready reference files; preparation of bibliographies; electronic dissemination of information; participation in designing information posted on the Library's home page and providing advice concerning the home page; and selection of information resources for the general reference collection and recommendations on resources for inclusion in other Dag Hammarskjöld Library collections.

23. Among recent achievements of the Unit, the consultants have noted the following:

(a) "CyberSeek", a course designed for basic training in retrieving and downloading information from the Internet. This was originally restricted to delegates and mission staff, but has now been extended, in response to demand, to everyone affiliated with the United Nations. The Unit has now announced advanced Internet courses, "CyberSpecials", devoted to human rights, terrorism, the United Nations, environment and sustainable development, international law and international organizations;

(b) "Bookmarks", a collection of Internet sites identified as the most reliable, useful and navigable. Those sites, with the requisite links, are being prepared for posting on the Secretariat's Intranet and possibly on the Internet as well;

(c) A series of bibliographies on the United Nations, prepared for internal distribution and posted on the Internet, on United Nations reform, the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council, peacekeeping operations and the Office of the Secretary-General. Two more bibliographies are in preparation: on dispute settlement (in French) and on water resources in the Middle East;

(d) "NewsEdge", live-time news-feed workstations and related training courses on news gathering;

(e) Informal lunchtime tours of the general reference area held on Thursdays to encourage the use of the Internet, CD-ROM and NewsEdge workstations. The Unit has seven public Internet workstations that have been very popular with Library users;

(f) Selective electronic dissemination of information using cc:Mail. This is a customized, desktop delivery service to mission and Secretariat staff, regional commissions, peacekeeping operations and others, based on World News Connection, an international news alert service of the Government of the United States of America, and tailored to interest profiles of users. The Unit has also disseminated selected electronic journals and newsletters in this manner.

24. These initiatives are good examples of successful activities aiming to assert the leadership role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in enhancing access to worldwide electronic information resources. The consultants have, however, identified some problems that need to be addressed:

(a) Certain types of access, now available on the Intranet, will have to be protected when placed on the Internet.

Recommendation 5. Passwords can be required to protect sensitive internal information placed on the Internet.

(b) Selective electronic dissemination of information has become so successful that continued servicing has already exceeded the system's capacity; if the daily number of messages rises above 3,000, the network would crash. Consequently, the Electronic Services Division of the Office of Conference and Support Services halted that service. A solution was found while the present evaluation was in progress: the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been assigned its own electronic post office so that the dissemination service can be reinstated. This is the type of dynamic approach that helps overcome challenges posed by electronic information and the infrastructure that it requires.

(c) NewsEdge, which is heavily used by patrons from developing countries, is prohibitively expensive.

Recommendation 6. Additional sources of funding should be sought to help support the NewsEdge service, which is heavily used in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, especially by patrons from developing countries.

4. Combined United Nations/Specialized Agencies Reference Unit and General Reference Unit

25. The consultants have noted that some staff and certain observers are of the view that, in the interest of efficiency, the United Nations/Specialized Agencies Unit and the General Reference Unit should be combined. The majority view, however, seems to be that there is justification for keeping the units separate.

Recommendation 7. In view of the specialized needs, techniques and use patterns involving reference work with the United Nations and specialized agencies information resources, the United Nations/Specialized Agencies Reference Unit and the General Reference Unit should continue as separate units within the User Services Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

5. Loan and Stacks Unit

26. While the consultants are concerned about the existence of two separate loan desks, they understand that the physical limitations of the library building combined with the close proximity of the United Nations/specialized agencies loan desk on the second floor to the United Nations collection as well as the United Nations/Specialized Agencies Reference Unit would make it difficult to merge the two loan desks. The consultants support the continued incorporation of interlibrary loan services into the Loan and Stacks Unit.

27. Shelf space is rapidly filling up, and parts of the collections have had to be moved to areas of the stacks where they do not belong.

Recommendation 8. In order to accommodate a rapidly growing collection (especially United Nations and specialized agency material and government and intergovernmental organization publications), the Library should acquire compact shelving where warranted, thereby allowing more efficient concentration of coherent parts of the collection that is to be shelved away from areas of frequent use.

6. Branch libraries

28. The Legal Library consists of materials on international relations and public and private international law, and primarily serves the needs of the Office of Legal Affairs, although it regularly receives queries from other units of the Secretariat, as well as from the permanent missions and outside researchers. On the average, it handles between 300 and 400 queries a month, most often concerning bilateral and multilateral treaties. The Legal Librarian is also involved in selecting material for the Legal Library, as well as selecting legal materials for the main library.

29. The collection of the Statistical Library consists of official economic and statistical publications from most countries of the world and from several intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Its main user is the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The Statistical Library answers more than 260 queries each month.

30. The Legal Library and the Statistical Library both have strong connections with the main library. To take just three examples: cataloguing for the branch libraries is handled by the main library; older material from the branch libraries is routinely returned to be housed in the main library; and, most importantly, staff resources are shared as needed. It is, therefore, the view of the consultants that the two branch libraries should remain in their separate locations, but administratively should continue to be part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. (The Map Library has been discussed above, in connection with the Cartographic Section.)

7. Depository libraries

31. Since 1946, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has arranged for the distribution of United Nations documents and publications to users around the world through its depository library system. At present, 351 depository libraries in 142 countries receive such materials, with the understanding that their collections will be well-maintained and be available to the public free of charge. Both Member and non-member States are entitled to one free depository library, usually the national library. In addition, the national parliamentary library, if it is open to the public, is entitled to receive material free of charge. Other depository libraries pay an annual contribution to receive United Nations documentation. The current annual contribution for full depositories (which receive United Nations masthead documents as well as *Official Records* and printed publications) is US$ 14,000 for libraries in industrialized countries; for partial depositories (receiving *Official Records*

and printed publications only), the annual contribution is $900. Developing countries pay $300 and $200, respectively. The annual cost to the United Nations of supplying a full depository is about $15,000, but the consultants consider this a cost well worth paying: depository libraries are a most important means for the United Nations to disseminate information worldwide to a large public, promoting greater understanding of the Organization's goals, programmes and achievements (see additional comments under the section on outreach and marketing).

32. The designation of depositories is carried out by the United Nations Publications Board with the advice of the Head Librarian of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and taking into account the views of the Government concerned. The degree of development of the requesting libraries and the overall geographic distribution of depository libraries in the countries concerned are among the criteria applied. The Depository Libraries Officer and her staff administer the worldwide depository system, conduct training programmes for depository librarians, publicize information concerning depository libraries and arrange periodic visits by United Nations librarians and information officers to depository libraries to provide assistance and training in the management of the United Nations collection.

33. The consultants wish to raise three additional issues in connection with the depository system, namely, the impact of electronic information on depository libraries, extrabudgetary funds for certain depository-related activities and networking between United Nations offices and depository libraries.

34. As more and more United Nations information becomes available electronically (on the Internet, CD-ROM, etc.), it may become feasible for the United Nations to reduce shipments of physical items as long as the depository libraries in recipient countries have access to the electronic information. Related to this is the proposal, made in the course of the 1996 survey of depository libraries, that a United Nations office located in each country be connected with telephone links to be able to access UNBIS and perhaps the optical disk system, and serve as a gateway. One depository library per country, connected to the United Nations office in question, could, in turn, become a national focal point for dissemination of United Nations information in electronic form. The consultants understand that Gabon has already implemented such a scheme, and recommend that this approach be put into practice wherever feasible, leading to more cost-effective delivery of United Nations information. Extrabudgetary funds should be actively sought to enhance access of depository libraries to serve their clientele. In this connection, the consultants note with interest the laudable proposal of the Government of Japan, dated 26 November 1996, to contribute $31,866 to the training programme for depository libraries.

Recommendation 9. The consultants endorse the proposal that a United Nations office located in each country be connected with telephone links to be able to access UNBIS and eventually the optical disk system, and that one depository library per country be connected to that United Nations office and become a national focal point for dissemination of United Nations information in electronic form. This approach should be put into practice wherever feasible, leading to a more cost-effective delivery of United Nations information.

8. 1996 user survey

35. As mandated by recommendation 19 of the latest report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services,[4] the Dag Hammarskjöld Library conducted, from 11 November to 2 December 1996, a questionnaire-based user survey. The Library issued its report of the survey on 15 January 1997. The consultants feel that user surveys are beneficial and that they should be conducted periodically, but that more care should be exercised in their design, administration and analysis.

Recommendation 10. Carefully designed, administered and analysed user surveys should be conducted periodically in order to ensure that the information gathered can be applied effectively and systematically in future planning of the services of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

9. Statistics

36. Statistics on user services for 1996 are shown in table 2.

37. The figures in table 2 convey the quantitative aspect of the range and extent of user service activities. They also raise concerns, some of which have been borne out by interviews with staff.

(a) Library use statistics are not necessarily compiled in the same way at the two reference units.

Recommendation 11. The method of compiling library use statistics should be standardized throughout the User Services Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in order to ensure better comparability and develop a more reliable management tool.

Table 2
User services, 1996

Reference and loan services	
Reference queries answered	74 066
Items loaned	118 185
Photocopying and microfiche copying	778 261
Inter-library loans requested by Dag Hammarskjöld Library	309
Inter-library loans received by Dag Hammarskjöld Library	329
Training seminars and workshops given	
Group training (31 sessions)	455 attendees
Individual training	237 attendees
Depository library system	
New libraries designated	4
Libraries visited	16
Questionnaires sent	624
Total depository libraries as at 31 December 1996: 355 in 142 countries	
Africa	51
Asia and the Pacific	97
Eastern Europe	29
Western Europe	83
Latin America/Caribbean	44
North America	51
Partial deposit	187
Full deposit	168
Contribution-paying	169
Free of charge	186

Source:
"Dag Hammarskjöld Library: Programme Performance Report, January-December 1996", inter-office memorandum, from Head Librarian to Director, Library and Publications Division, 7 January 1997, and other documentation provided for the present evaluation.

(b) The amount of photocopying is far too high, especially at a time of dwindling financial and human resources. This issue should be addressed, with the aim of becoming more cost-effective. Improved access to bibliographic records has probably been one of the factors contributing to an increased appetite for photocopying. The consultants realize that this is a systemic problem going well beyond what the Dag Hammarskjöld Library itself can do, but it should be recognized that the Library's budget suffers from a disproportionate burden of photocopy use as it provides an Organization-wide service. The Organization should find some means of cost recovery in this area. That would not only reduce the Library's burden, but might also discourage indiscriminate copying.

Recommendation 12. A cost-recovery scheme for photocopying in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library should be investigated by the Organization and, if possible, introduced.

E. Information resources

38. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library maintains collections in the following categories:

(a) Documents and publications of the organizations of the United Nations system and of the League of Nations;

(b) The general collection, comprising externally acquired information on subjects of permanent as well as current interest to the Organization, as required by staff of the permanent missions of Member States, delegates and Secretariat staff in the execution of their duties, regardless of format (including on-line access, CD-ROMS, hard-copy monographs, periodicals and maps);

(c) Publications of research value about the organizations within the United Nations system and the League of Nations.

39. It should be noted that in the modern information environment, the information resources of a library cannot be viewed only in terms of the material in its collections, whether they be in print, audio-visual or electronic formats, but also in terms of the library's ability to gain timely access to material that lies outside its own walls.

40. The concept of the virtual library, which describes the combination of on-site access to a library's collection (print, audio-visual or electronic), with remote access to electronic information that can be down loaded, is no longer a dream. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has begun to take steps in this direction and now provides desktop access to some information resources to clients who possess the technological capability. It must, however, be noted that the cost of electronic resources and access to them in a networked environment is high and that a significant increase in budgetary provision may be required to achieve the desired level of enhancement.

41. Access to UNBIS Plus, the UNBIS files and the optical disc system, for which UNBIS provides an invaluable interface, combined with the databases indicated in table 3, provide evidence of the Library's efforts in this direction.

42. The consultants firmly believe that the continued enhancement of information resources of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is desirable, but emphasize that this should not be done at the expense of the traditional print resources, as there will be a continuing need for information in the traditional media. It must be recognized that not all information will be available in electronic format and, even more importantly, it is the obligation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to provide all delegates and mission staff with access to information.

Table 3
Databases available at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library

	United Nations	*Specialized agencies*	*External*
On-line databases	8	0	13
CD-ROM databases	9	10	62
Total	**17**	**10**	**75**
Grand total 102			

Recommendation 13. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library should ensure continued access to information in the traditional media to meet the needs of delegates and mission staff who may not yet possess the equipment to use electronic resources.

43. In the area of information resources there are three areas of concern. The first is the ability of the Library to track usage of serials and monographs in its external collection to enable the reduction of expenditure on resources that are not in demand. It is hoped that this will be addressed when the circulations module of the Integrated Library Management System is introduced.

Recommendation 14. Cutbacks on expenditure in the area of non-United Nations serials should be the result of usage tracking systems built into the Integrated Library Management System.

44. The second area of concern relates to the preservation role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Implicit in its aim to achieve comprehensive coverage of United Nations documents and publications is the obligation to ensure that this material is preserved. The microfilming project, which has now ceased, offered this protection. However, with its cessation, there is no provision for ensuring preservation, as the shelf life of optical disk and CD-ROM technology is yet to be determined. Binding should be explored, as it might be a more cost-effective option.

Recommendation 15. Every effort should be made to reintroduce microfilming of United Nations documents and publications. Contracting-out of preservation microfilming and binding should be explored, as it might be a more cost-effective option.

45. The third area of concern relates to the provision of electronic access to older United Nations documents that have not yet been digitized. The consultants took note of resolution 51/211 C of 18 December 1996, in which the General Assembly calls on the Secretary-General "to complete the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents on the United Nations Web site on a priority basis, so that these archives are also available to Member States through that medium". The first step in implementing the resolution is the digitization of the material.

Recommendation 16. In implementing General Assembly resolution 51/211 C, the feasibility of contracting out the digitization of important older United Nations documents from existing microfiche should be investigated with a view to uploading this material on the United Nations Web site.

F. Products of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library

46. The consultants wish to highlight some of the major printed and electronic products of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, without attempting to be exhaustive. The comments deal with the Integrated Library Management System interface aspect of the electronic products below, under the section on infrastructure.

(a) The Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page on the Internet was launched on 3 July 1996 as part of the United Nations presence on the World Wide Web. Its scope is expanding constantly. At the time of the present evaluation, it contained the following main elements: Services and Collections, Databases and Publications, Reference Guides, UN Info Quest (UN-I-QUE), Depository Libraries and Directory of Services. The consultants commend the role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in promoting this innovative method of making more United

Nations information available electronically, not only to the official users of its services, but to the world at large.

Recommendation 17. The scope and contents of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page should continue to be steadily expanded as a way of making United Nations information accessible more widely and promptly in a cost-effective manner.

Recommendation 18. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library should make and keep itself available to work with the Information Technology Section of the Department of Public Information to assist other parts of the Secretariat in Web development, if required.

(b) The following institutional publications were issued in 1996:

(i) *United Nations Documentation: A Brief Guide* (ST/LIB/34/Rev.2);

(ii) *United Nations Documentation: A List of Basic Reference Sources* (ST/LIB/34/Rev.2/Add.1);

(iii) "Instructions for depository libraries receiving United Nations material" (ST/LIB/13/Rev.5);

(iv) "Principles Governing United Nations depository libraries" (ST/AI/189/Add.11/Rev.2);

(v) *UNBIS Thesaurus* (ST/LIB/40/Rev.1).[5]

These revised editions are useful updates of guides that assist users of United Nations documentation to take advantage of that rich resource in a more effective manner. They should continue to be issued as needed and as funds permit.

(c) Bibliographies on thematic issues, including United Nations reform, the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council, peacekeeping operations and the Office of the Secretary-General, have been released in print form and have also been posted on the Dag Hammarskjöld Library home page. The consultants commend the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for having made those useful thematic bibliographies available electronically.

(d) "UNDOC" (ST/LIB/SER.M/-), a printed product of the UNBIS DOCFILE database, was issued between 1979 and September 1996. It was the principal general index covering non-restricted United Nations documents and publications, consisting of a checklist arranged by document series symbol and providing full bibliographic information and author, title and subject indexes. It also included lists of maps, sales publications and new document series symbols. The printed version appeared quarterly, with annual cumulations on microfiche since 1984 (paper cumulations up to 1984). This product had been the subject of criticism on the grounds of over-indexing, gaps and lack of timeliness. For official users with access to UNBIS and for those outside the United Nations who can afford to subscribe to the UNBIS Plus CD-ROM product (produced jointly by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the commercial firm Chadwyck-Healey), DOCFILE (together with several other UNBIS files) remains accessible. However, those who continue to rely on printed indexes, especially in developing countries, are deprived of this information. The consultants note that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library plans to issue the documents index as a printed publication. The consultants endorse the plans by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to start issuing this successor publication of "UNDOC" as soon as possible.

(e) *Indexes to Proceedings* (ST/LIB/SER.B/) of the General Assembly (beginning with the fifth session, 1950/51), the Security Council (beginning with 1964), the Economic and Social Council (beginning with the fourteenth session in 1952) and the Trusteeship Council (beginning with the eleventh session in 1952) cover the proceedings and documentation of each organ concerned. The two main parts are a subject index and an index to speeches. Beginning with the thirtieth session of the General Assembly (1975) and in 1976 for the Security Council, a voting chart for resolutions adopted has also been included. These indexes are now produced with a minimum of time lag, and the consultants hope that this timeliness can be maintained. The corresponding electronic UNBIS files are ITP (index to proceedings) and ITS (index to speeches). There is also a separate VOTEREC (voting records) component. It is regrettable that the other language versions of the printed Indexes to Proceedings have been discontinued, but the consultants understand that this had to be done, primarily for economic reasons. The consultants strongly urge, however, that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library continue publication of the paper version in English.

(f) Back-of-the-book indexing was done for the *Blue Books Series*, the *Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization*, the United Nations system yellow pages and others. Such indexes, especially for the *Blue Books Series*, facilitate the use of the volumes that bring United Nations contributions over the decades to the attention not only of the Organization's own regular constituency, but of the scholarly community and the larger public as well. The consultants congratulate the Dag Hammarskjöld Library on this initiative.

47. The consultants have noted that a 30 per cent reduction in the print runs of Dag Hammarskjöld Library sales publications is planned. They believe that this step responds

to actual user demand and will result in economies for the Organization.

G. Networking, cooperation and coordination

48. This section addresses the cooperative and collaborative activities of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at different levels. To avoid misunderstanding, an attempt has been made to define and discuss each term in the context of its use here.

49. "Networking" is used to cover the activities of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library that are aimed at working in association with the United Nations libraries (United Nations Office at Geneva, Vienna International Centre) and the major libraries of the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other duty stations, achieve a network of United Nations libraries. Such a network would require that each library share in the processing and indexing of documents originating in its organization.

50. In this connection, the consultants took note of the following documents:

(a) A note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Towards an integrated library network of the United Nations system" (A/47/669);

(b) Comments by the Secretary-General on the above-mentioned report (A/48/83);

(c) Comments by the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the JIU report (A/48/83/Add.1);

(d) Contribution to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the recommendations contained in document A/47/669 (prepared by the Head Librarian).

51. The consultants share the general sentiment that there is a need for United Nations organizations to establish effective linkages and to collaborate in developing library networks based on internationally accepted standards. The consultants observed that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library was given the role of "network leader and judicious coordinator of common databases".[6] They have also noted the existence of a permanent inter-library panel, the Task Force on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management of the Information Systems Coordination Committee, and that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which is an active member of the panel, expects to participate in future meetings of the Task Force if travel funds permit, or if teleconferencing facilities become available. The consultants believe that although face-to-face meetings are important and useful, in the face of dwindling financial resources greater use can be made of teleconferencing.

Recommendation 19. In view of dwindling financial resources, greater use should be made of teleconferencing via the Internet (closed discussion groups), which can be used for consultation and decision-making in support of the integration process.

United Nations network of libraries

52. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has an important role to play in promoting the integration process by providing leadership for shared indexing projects which, if successfully managed, would provide greater access to a wider range of documents and publications from the United Nations, its organizations and specialized agencies. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has already developed a proposal for the development of a shared indexing network within United Nations libraries. Its successful implementation is, however, dependent on the introduction of the Integrated Library Management System. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has already adopted international standards, as recommended by the Task Force on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management, and plans are in place to strengthen its thesaurus development and authority control capabilities. The consultants therefore believe that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is well-placed to provide the leadership needed to promote the emergence of a United Nations network of libraries.

Recommendation 20. The efforts by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to introduce an Integrated Library Management System in keeping with international standards, as recommended by the Task Force on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management of the Information Systems Coordination Committee, should be expedited because they are crucial to the success of networking activities.

53. The new structure being proposed in connection with the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 identifies a new section, the Electronic Resource Development Section, within which is an Indexing, Network and Resource Preservation Unit. The consultants believe that this is a step in the right direction.

Recommendation 21. Every effort should be made to strengthen the Electronic Resource Development Section, and particularly its Indexing, Network and Resource Preservation Unit, in view of the role the United Nations

network of libraries can play in improving access to the publications and documents of the United Nations system.

54. "Cooperation" refers to activities undertaken jointly with other departments in the Secretariat, with the libraries of special bodies within the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), or with commercial firms, such as Chadwyck-Healey in the case of UNBIS Plus.

55. The successful cooperation between the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Electronic Services Division of the Office of Conference and Support Services in the production of the optical disk system has been mentioned previously. The consultants believe that those Library should actively seek to identify opportunities for cooperation in the development of information products and their delivery, not only within the Secretariat, but also with the libraries of special bodies such as UNICEF and UNDP.

56. "Coordination" refers to activities of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library with respect to the reference collections, specialized libraries or documentation centres within the Secretariat.

57. The consultants have noted the number of reference centres that exist within the Secretariat and the procedures for the establishment and maintenance of branch libraries and reference centres in the Secretariat. They have also taken note of efforts by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to advise and assist in planning and in management techniques. However, the consultants note that those activities are performed by an officer with other major responsibilities and therefore wonder how meaningful the assistance can be. The consultants view the effective coordination of those centres as essential for cost-effective operations and efficient service and recommend that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library initiate discussions with the various departments with a view to ensuring more effective coordination and cost-effective operations.

Recommendation 22. Staff support for the coordination of reference centres should be strengthened.

H. Outreach and marketing

58. Certain activities that could be considered outreach, such as attempts by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to assist in the development of reference centres in the departments of the Secretariat, its work with the depository libraries and the creation and continued development of its home page on the World Wide Web, have already been dealt with in previous sections of this report. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the Research Libraries Information Network linkage provides a vehicle for the dissemination of bibliographic data (from the DOCFILE and CATFILE databases, accessible through UNBIS) to a wider audience.

59. The consultants would therefore like to focus on the marketing aspect, which, they believe, needs improvement. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library currently offers a variety of very useful services and products, but knowledge of them at permanent missions and in the Secretariat is not as widespread as would be expected. The need for closer attention to marketing is borne out by the user survey conducted recently and referred to in the section entitled "1996 user survey". A significant number of the respondents indicated lack of awareness of many of the services offered by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the products that have been developed to provide access to information generated by United Nations bodies.

60. There is thus a clear need for the introduction of an aggressive marketing programme to complement the promotional activities already being undertaken. The consultants believe that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library should adopt tried and tested marketing strategies. Market surveys should be used to identify users' needs. Appropriate services and products should be developed and tailored to meet the identified needs, after which promotional programmes should be implemented for existing and newly developed products.

I. Infrastructure

1. Information technology

61. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been making increasingly extensive use of information technology but, for reasons beyond its control, its effort to improve the level of technological application in the provision of library services has not progressed as quickly as expected. The consultants are nevertheless pleased to note the urgency with which implementation of the Integrated Library Management System, known as Horizon, is being pursued and hope that the system will be introduced during calendar year 1997. This system, when fully functional, will significantly improve the efficiency of many operations in the Library. (It should be noted, however, that Horizon in its present version cannot accommodate certain Dag Hammarskjöld Library files, such as the Thesaurus and Index to Speeches files.) Careful attention should be given to the training of staff in the use of this new system to ensure that when it becomes fully operational, maximum efficiency is achieved.

Recommendation 23. The Integrated Library Management System should be made fully functional during calendar year 1997, in order to attain maximum efficiency of library operations.

62. The consultants have noted that the staff of the permanent missions and the Secretariat who have the technological capability now have desktop access through the Library to a growing number of electronic services and products, and that for those who lack such capability, the service is available at workstations in the Library.

Recommendation 24. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library should continue to provide an adequate number of workstations for access to electronic information resources to meet the needs of those missions that lack the required facilities.

63. The selective electronic dissemination of information by the Library has been so popular that it had to seek funds to obtain a server in order to have its own electronic post office. The consultants were pleased to note that the equipment is now being acquired. Also receiving positive feedback is the Library's home page, on which a variety of information is posted. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is to be congratulated on the above initiatives.

64. The inventory of computer equipment available in the Library indicates that some was acquired as early as 1990, and may need to be replaced very soon.

Recommendation 25. Needs for computer equipment should be monitored and addressed continually to ensure that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is able to provide an effective library service based on the best available technology.

2. Financial resources

65. The consultants recognize the constraints of the financial environment in which the United Nations operates and its effect on budgetary provision for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The consultants have accordingly noted the levels of budget reductions mandated by the General Assembly and the efforts by the Library to meet and operate within the requirements. At the same time, however, the consultants have taken note of the desire by the General Assembly (reflected in their terms of reference) to secure improved library services taking advantage of new, cost-effective automated and electronic library information and communication technologies and services. The consultants therefore wish to emphasize the following:

(a) The delivery of electronic information services cannot be effectively carried out without adequate budgetary support;

(b) There is a high cost associated with electronic products in a networked environment;

(c) The associated equipment may need to be upgraded periodically;

(d) The availability of information technology in libraries is not a complete substitute for printed material.

To elaborate on the last point, it is worth recalling that:

(a) Many United Nations documents, especially older ones, are not yet available in electronic form;

(b) There is a basic, core collection of external source material that must be kept and maintained for the use of permanent missions and the Secretariat staff;

(c) The United Nations must continue to provide access to printed documentation for the benefit of Member States with inadequate infrastructure for accessing electronic resources.

Recommendation 26. The consultants strongly urge that adequate budgetary provision be made for printed materials in addition to electronic information products and services.

3. Human resources

66. The staffing requirements of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for the biennium 1998-1999 are as follows: D-1, 1; P-5, 4; P-4, 9; P-3, 24; P-2, 17; General Service, 66; total 121. Those figures take into account a reduction of 10 posts slated for abolition, but, on the other hand, incorporate 5 posts in the Professional category from the Cartographic Section. The figure of 121 should be compared to the total 1986 staff of 148 (58 in the Professional and 90 in the General Service category).

67. The consultants are satisfied that, for the most part, the Library staff have the skills and background appropriate for each assignment. The consultants have also noted that, in general, staff members are flexible and willing to take on new tasks. The consultants have noted some concern about changes necessitated by downsizing, but believe that changes, implemented in accordance with changing priorities and in consultation with all concerned, can be beneficial both to the Library and to the staff.

68. An idea worth exploring is to expose staff on a systematic basis to the work of the sections of the Library other than their own.

Recommendation 27. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library should regularly schedule orientation sessions open to its staff, and staff should be more flexible in accepting this. The resulting increased familiarity with the work of the entire Dag Hammarskjöld Library would enhance cohesion.

J. Future development

69. The proposal to create a new Electronic Resource Development Section is a positive step that speaks to the development of the Library as it positions itself to provide continued leadership in the establishment of a network of United Nations libraries that will provide easy access to a wide range of information resources. Particularly commendable are the areas of product development and fund-raising and resource development, with their potential for income generation. The consultants fully endorse this move in the hope that the expected benefits will be realized.

70. Equally important is the Systems Management and Internet Group, as the move to the new Horizon platform and continued use of the Internet to provide wider access to United Nations information resources will ensure more effective operations within the Library.

71. The consultants recognize that additional new skills will be required in the future to ensure the continued effective development of information technology applications within the Library.

Recommendation 28. Future recruitment to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library should emphasize knowledge and skills in information technology.

K. Conclusion

72. In conclusion, the consultants wish to emphasize that in their view, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is a United Nations-wide resource and an essential part of the infrastructure of the Organization. It is performing an important role in the delivery of information to its varied clientele, showing sensitivity to the needs of developed as well as developing countries within the constraints of financial resources. The consultants are aware of the view that some aspects of its work should be contracted out to service providers and they have in fact identified two areas that would lend themselves to such an arrangement. However, the consultants do not recommend changes in the areas relating to user services and the processes that directly affect those services.

73. The consultants feel that the United Nations has an obligation to provide information support to all its constituents and that this will be performed most efficiently by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. They are particularly concerned that the needs of all Member States be recognized, especially those in which information technology and the library and information infrastructure are not yet fully developed. Therefore, the consultants feel that it is incumbent on the United Nations to ensure through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library that library services to that sector of its community are maintained. At the same time, the consultants hold the view that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library must continue to develop its technological capabilities so that it can provide rapid and ever-increasing access to the vast array of United Nations and other information resources. In this way, the concept of the virtual library will be realized, enabling the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to satisfy its varied constituencies.

74. The consultants wish to record their appreciation for the full cooperation extended to them by all throughout the present evaluation. They were satisfied with the comprehensiveness of the background documentation provided, the office facilities and the helpfulness of the Head Librarian and her staff. They appreciated the opportunity to conduct this important study and hope that it will be useful in shaping the future of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

Notes

1 A/C.5/298, paras. 3-5.

2 *Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations* (London, 1946) (PC/20), p. 89, para. 39(3).

3 ST/SGB/257.

4 E/AC.51/1996/2.

5 *UNBIS Thesaurus* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 95.I.33).

6 A/47/669, footnote to recommendation 4.